

WRITING a letter of complaint

B Read the letter and answer the questions.

- 1 Who is the letter to?
- 2 Why is the writer complaining?
- 3 What does he want to achieve?

15 Maple Road
 Hillhead
 HH12 84L
 5th February

Hillhead Local Council
 1662 Parkway
 Hillhead, H3 7JT

Dear Sir or Madam,

- 1 I am writing with regard to the Council's recent installation of CCTV cameras in our area.
- 2 Briefly, the problem is that despite guarantees about safeguarding the CCTV images, it is possible for anyone to view them on their home computer because the system is internet-linked and not password-protected. As a result, pictures cannot be kept secure and, in fact, myself and my car can be identified in images that were recently posted online. I regard this as a serious invasion of privacy as well as a violation of the local council promise to taxpayers.
- 3 I have already pursued this matter with the local police department, who have advised me to contact you immediately.
- 4 In order to resolve this matter I am requesting that you remove the images where I appear without delay (specific coordinates are detailed in the enclosed document), and that you take action to prevent further invasions of privacy in the future. This would include ensuring that internet-based CCTV images are passworded and that techniques are used to blur the pictures so that individuals are unrecognisable.
- 5 Please contact me within ten days of the date of this letter to confirm that these steps have been taken. If you need to contact me by telephone, you may reach me at (0141) 985-001.
- 6 Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Steven Jones

Steven Jones

C Write the number of the paragraph next to the correct topic.

- a) explain what you have done so far 3
- b) give a time frame for action and a way of contacting you
- c) state the overall reason for writing, in one sentence
- d) write a polite closing comment
- e) ask for specific action from the person/company you are writing to
- f) give additional detail about the reason for writing

LEARN TO use formal written language

8A Match informal phrases 1–7 with formal phrases in the letter.

- 1 Get in touch soon to let me know that you've done something
- 2 To put things right, I want you to ...
- 3 I'm writing about
- 4 With best wishes
- 5 Thanks for dealing with this problem quickly
- 6 I'm sending something with this letter
- 7 I've already discussed the problem

B Work in pairs. Underline all the examples of the passive in the letter. Why is it used so often?

speakout tip

A letter of complaint should follow 'The Four Cs'. It should be: concise, clear, constructive and considerate. Reread the letter. Does it follow all four of 'The Four Cs'?